SECRET EMPIRE™

MARVEL

#6

NICK SPENCER, LEINIL FRANCIS YU, ROD REIS, JOSHUA CASSARA

AFTER SO MUCH STRUGGLE, THIS WAS OUR MOMENT OF RECKONING.

DID YOU SEE HER?

I SAW HER. THE GODDESS BY THE LAKE. SHE'S BEAUTIFUL. HER POWER IS UNENDING--

--BUT SHE-- SHE ***NEEDS*** ME. CAN YOU HELP ME GET BACK TO HER?

NO ONE CAN HELP YOU HERE, YOU POOR FOOL.

NO ONE BUT ME.

N-NO! PLEASE, DON'T!

HELP ME!!! HEEEELP!!! DON'T LET HIM TAKE ME--

DON'T WORRY, HERR ROGERS--

--YOUR TURN IS COMING SOON ENOUGH...

WHEN WE STOOD FACE TO FACE AGAINST ALL WE FEARED...

...WHEN THE DARKNESS STARED BACK AT US.

DAGGER-- IT'S ME, CLAIRE. I KNOW IT'S HARD, BUT...I NEED A LITTLE LIGHT, OKAY? DAREDEVIL TAUGHT ME HOW TO GET UP HERE BLIND-- THIS PART, THOUGH--

CAN'T... JUST NEED TO REST...

TANDY, PLEASE--JUST A LITTLE MORE LIGHT--

...TY?

IT'S ME-- JUST SHINE A LITTLE MORE FOR TODAY, ALL RIGHT? THEN IT'LL BE--

--OKAY.

[illegible]

OH GOD, I HATE HEIGHTS.

MANHATTAN.
WITHIN THE DARKFORCE DOME.

HURTS...

I KNOW, SWEETHEART, I KNOW...

...THIS SHOULD HELP.

WHAT *IS* THAT?

YOU'VE NEVER ASKED ***BEFORE,*** CLOAK...

BUT NOW I'M REALIZING IT'S ***NOT WORKING.*** SHE CAN'T KEEP DOING THIS. IT'S GOING TO ***KILL*** HER.

TRUST ME, I KNOW...

"...WE'VE GOT OUR BEST DOCTOR WORKING ON IT."

STEPHEN STRANGE...

...IT'S BEEN SOME TIME SINCE YOU VISITED THESE HALLS. I THOUGHT YOU WERE TOO GOOD FOR US LOWLY COLLECTORS. ISN'T THAT WHY YOU CAST US OUT OF YOUR LITTLE GUILD YEARS AGO?

THINGS AREN'T WHAT THEY USED TO BE, LIBRARIAN-- I'M LOOKING FOR A SPELL. ONE THAT WOULD BENEFIT US BOTH...

"...ONE THAT CAN BRING LIGHT TO THE DARKNESS."

MOE'S MOVERS

CLAP CLAP CLAP

OH, THANK GOD. THANK *GOD*, HE'S HERE--

--THE DEVIL OF HELL'S KITCHEN IS HERE TO KEEP US ALL *SAFE.*

WE THOUGHT WE COULD OUTSMART HIM JUST THIS ONCE, THOUGHT WE COULD PULL ONE OVER ON HIM...

...BUT ALAS, GENTLEMEN, HE HAS GOTTEN THE BETTER OF US YET AGAIN.

WHY DON'T WE SHOW HIM WHAT HE'S WON?

CANNED GOODS.

I WAS GOING TO DELIVER THEM TO THAT *HOSPITAL* YOU HAVE SO MANY PEOPLE HOLED UP IN. I HEARD THE CONDITIONS INSIDE ARE...*QUITE* SEVERE.

THIS DOESN'T MAKE ANY SENSE.

WHAT GAME ARE YOU PLAYING AT, WILSON?

GAME?

FOR AS LONG AS WE'VE BEEN STUCK IN THE DARK--YOU'VE BEEN PLAYING THE SAMARITAN ALL ACROSS THE CITY. AND NOT *ONCE* HAVE YOU ASKED FOR ANYTHING IN RETURN.

WELL, THAT'S NOT ENTIRELY TRUE--

--I'VE ASKED THEM TO *REMEMBER.*

PEOPLE HAVE SUCH SHORT MEMORIES, AFTER ALL--BUT THEY WON'T SOON FORGET WHO WAS THERE FOR THEM IN THIS, THEIR LITERAL DARKEST HOUR.

WHO PROTECTED THEM AND KEPT THEM FED WHEN ALL SEEMED LOST.

MOST OF THEM HAVE GIVEN UP, YOU KNOW. THEY DON'T BELIEVE THEY'LL *EVER* ESCAPE THIS PLACE.

BUT I HAVE *NEVER* GIVEN UP HOPE.

THIS IS *MY* CITY. AND I KNOW WHAT IT IS MADE OF, AT ITS CORE.

IT WILL FIND A WAY TO FREE ITSELF. IT WILL PUNISH THE ONES WHO DID THIS. AND THEN IT WILL RISE AGAIN.

AND WHO DO YOU THINK THEY WILL LOOK TO, WHEN THAT HAPPENS? ONCE IT'S ALL OVER, AND ALL THAT'S LEFT IS THE QUESTION--

--WHO WILL THEY TRUST TO GUIDE THEM FORWARD?

THE SUN WILL COME OUT, TOMORROW--
BET YOUR BOTTOM DOLLAR THAT, TOMORROW--
THERE'LL BE SUN...

WHERE ARE MY FRIENDS?

YOU DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT THEM ANYMORE, HERR ROGERS.

HOW DO YOU KNOW MY NAME?

I KNOW EVERYTHING ABOUT YOU. I KNOW YOU BETTER THAN PERHAPS ANYONE, IN A STRANGE WAY. TELL ME--

"--DO YOU *REALLY* NOT REMEMBER ME?"

I--I DON'T KNOW.

HM. WELL, ALLOW ME TO INTRODUCE MYSELF...

...I AM THE MAN WHO PUT YOU HERE.

AND WHERE IS "HERE"?

ISN'T IT OBVIOUS?

WE ARE IN HELL, OLD FRIEND.

YOU AND I ARE BUT GHOSTS NOW. THE FADING REMNANTS OF A ONCE GREAT WAR. IN THE END, WE CLAIMED EACH OTHER.

NOW THERE IS ONLY THIS... *TORMENT.*

AS YOU CAN SEE, I HAVE ADAPTED TO THESE SURROUNDINGS QUITE WELL. BUT YOU, I FEAR, ARE NOT MADE FOR THIS--

--AND SO I AM PREPARED TO GIVE YOU ONE LAST GIFT.

YOU SAID YOU COULD FREE ME FROM THIS PLACE...

HM. INDEED I CAN, CAPTAIN--

--BUT YOU SHOULD KNOW, THERE IS ONLY ONE PATH TO PEACE...

GGGH

TSSSSS--

...AND THAT IS *DEATH.*

AAA

SECRET EMPIRE

STEVE ROGERS, A.K.A. CAPTAIN AMERICA, HAS CLAIMED THE UNITED STATES FOR HYDRA. WITH MOST OF EARTH'S HEROES TRAPPED IN THE DARKFORCE BUBBLE SURROUNDING MANHATTAN OR STRANDED BEHIND THE PLANETARY DEFENSE SHIELD, HIS POWER SEEMS ABSOLUTE.

BLACK WIDOW BELIEVES THAT THE ONLY WAY TO STOP CAPTAIN AMERICA IS TO KILL HIM, BUT THE OTHER MEMBERS OF THE UNDERGROUND BELIEVE THAT THE SHATTERED COSMIC CUBE HOLDS THE KEY TO ROGERS' SUDDEN TRANSFORMATION, AND IT MIGHT BE ABLE TO SAVE HIM, IF THEY CAN PUT THE PIECES BACK TOGETHER. STEVE IS AFTER THE CUBE AS WELL, HOPING TO USE IT TO REWRITE THE WORLD IN HYDRA'S IMAGE.

TONY STARK'S TEAM WAS ABLE TO GATHER TWO SHARDS AND BRING THEM BACK TO THE MOUNT, BUT SOMEONE IN THE UNDERGROUND WAS WAITING TO TIP STEVE OFF TO THEIR RETURN. NOW, THE HYDRA SUPREME HAS COME TO COLLECT WHAT'S HIS, AND HE'S GOT A TRUMP CARD UP HIS SLEEVE: BRUCE BANNER, TEMPORARILY RESURRECTED AFTER BEING KILLED BY HAWKEYE DURING THE SECOND SUPER HERO CIVIL WAR.

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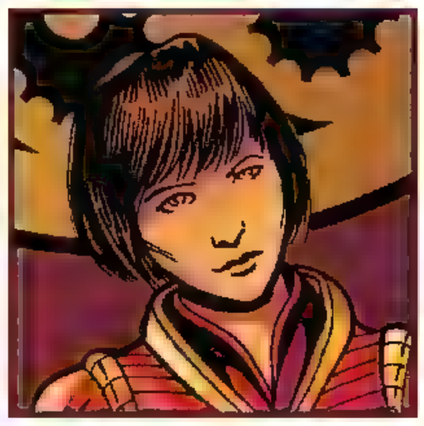
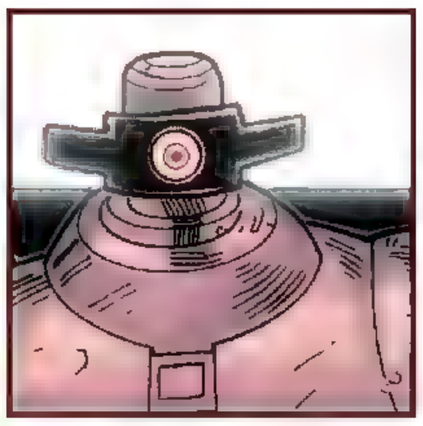
Hydra

Hydra Command

Captain America



Madame Hydra

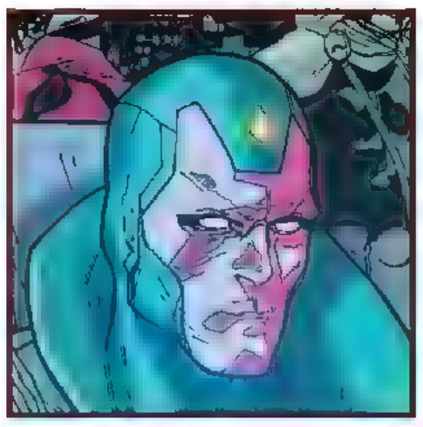


Arnim Zola

Avengers

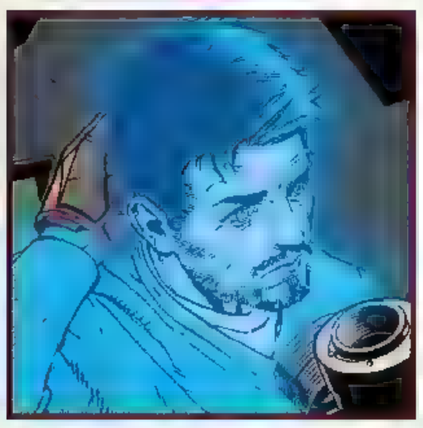
Scarlet Witch

Odinson

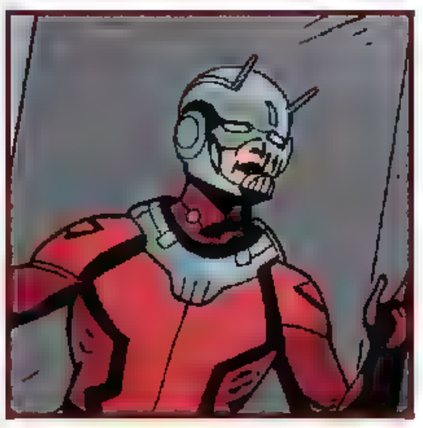


Vision

The Underground



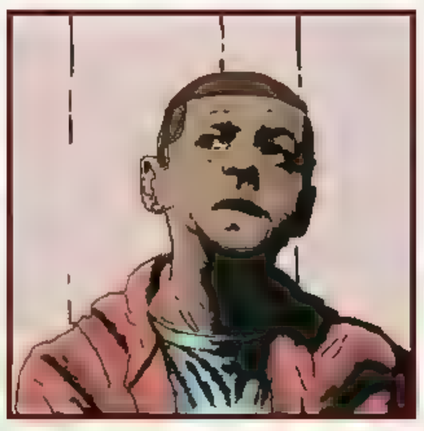
Tony Stark (A.I.)



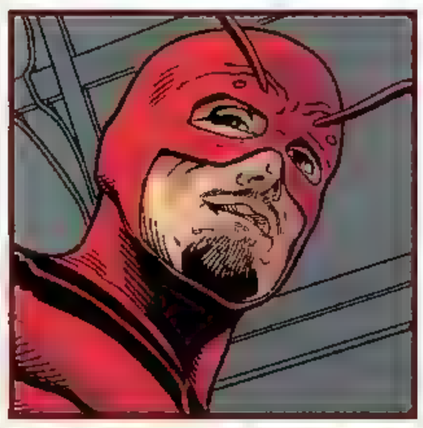
Ant-Man

Hercules

Sam Wilson

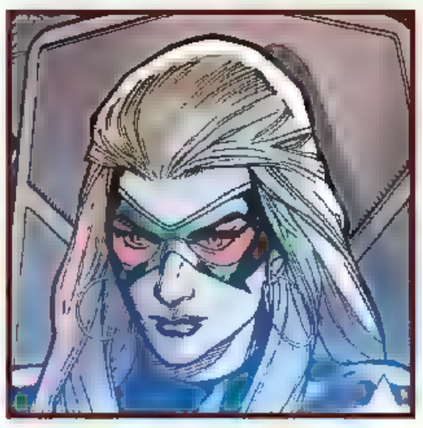


Rayshaun Lucas



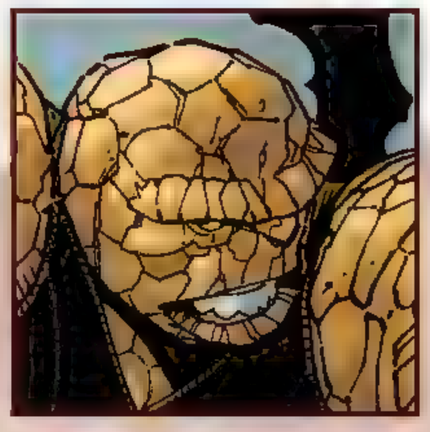
Giant-Man

Quicksilver



Mockingbird

Hawkeye



The Thing

Darkforce New York

Claire Temple

Doctor Strange

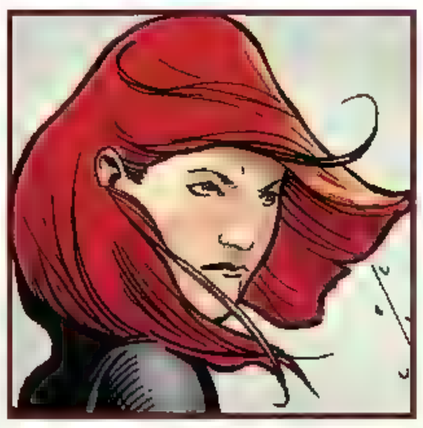
Cloak

Dagger

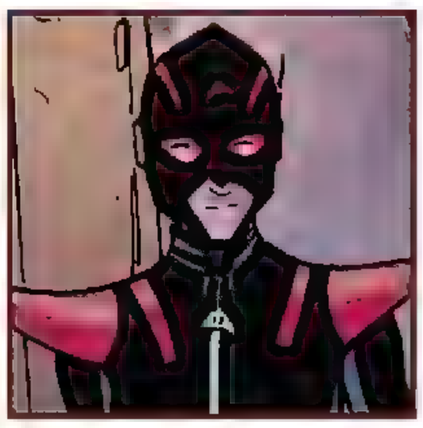
Daredevil

Kingpin

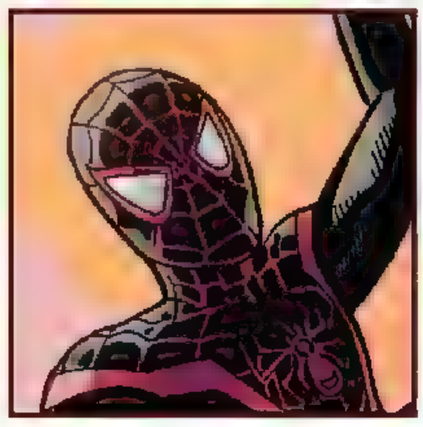
The Red Room



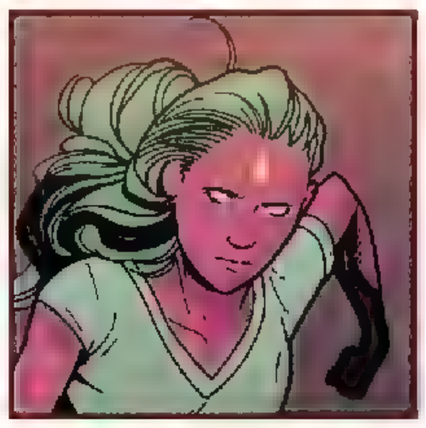
Black Widow



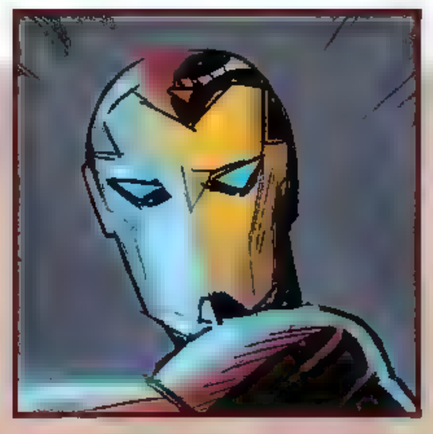
Wasp



Spider-Man



Viv Vision



Ironheart

Falcon

THAT'S IT! I AM DONE!

MARYLAND.

NADIA, JUST--SLOW DOWN--

NO, RIRI. I AM *DONE* TALKING. WE CAME HERE TO STAND BY SPIDER-MAN. TO TALK BLACK WIDOW OUT OF KILLING CAPTAIN AMERICA.

INSTEAD, *WE* ARE THE ONES BENDING TO HER WILL. LOOK AT WHAT SHE IS MAKING US BE A PART OF!

ASSASSINATION. *TORTURE.* AND NOW--WE ALLY OURSELVES WITH VIPER? SHE'S THE *WORST!* I THOUGHT THE POINT WAS DEFEATING HYDRA--

--NOT MAKING THEM OUR NEW *BEST FRIENDS.*

I HEAR YOU, NAD, BUT IT AIN'T THAT SIMPLE--

JOAQUIN IS RIGHT. THE SITUATION IS QUITE COMPLEX--

NO, IT ISN'T!

LISTEN TO ME-- ALL OF YOU. I HAVE LIVED THROUGH WHAT THE RED ROOM DOES TO YOU. WHAT IT MAKES YOU. WHAT IT *DESTROYS* INSIDE YOU.

I ESCAPED IT ONCE. I WILL NOT BE MADE A KILLER AGAIN--

--AND I WILL NOT LET IT HAPPEN TO MY FRIENDS.

OKAY, N.--WE GET IT, ALL RIGHT? THINGS ARE STARTING TO GET A LITTLE OUTTA HAND. I DIDN'T MEAN TO DRAG YOU ALL INTO THIS.

JUST--GIVE IT ONE MORE NIGHT. LET ME TALK TO HER...

"...SHE LISTENS TO ME."

GO AWAY, SPIDER-MAN.

HOW DO YOU KEEP--OKAY, WELL, LOOK, YOU SHOULD KNOW, THERE'S SOME DISSENSION IN THE RANKS BACK IN THE HOUSE--

NADIA.

SHE'S ABOUT FIVE MINUTES FROM CALLING AN UBER. S'FUNNY, I KINDA THOUGHT YOU TWO WOULD HIT IT OFF, GIVEN ALL YOU GOT IN COMMON, BUT--

--WELL, I THINK THAT WHOLE RED ROOM THING IS REALLY RUBBING HER THE WRONG WAY. WHICH IS NOT SURPRISING, I GUESS...

NO, IT IS NOT--

--BUT IT IS NECESSARY.

IS IT? I MEAN, WE SHOWED UP AT *YOUR* DOOR, REMEMBER? VOLUNTEER MISSION. YOU DIDN'T EVEN WANT US.

EVER WONDER IF THE "WELCOME TO HELL" PART WAS JUST OVERKILL?

IT'S WORKING, ISN'T IT? THE LAST MISSION WENT VERY SMOOTHLY. NO TEENAGE SUPER HERO HIJINX.

YOU MEAN BUSTING THAT OLD SICK GUY OUT OF HYDRA JAIL? YEAH, WHAT WAS UP WITH THAT? AND WHO *IS* HE?

"HE IS NOT YOUR CONCERN."

SEE, LIKE THAT. YOU COULD LET US IN ON THE DETAILS...

IN THE RED ROOM, THERE ARE NO DETAILS, ONLY ORDERS.

=SIGH= WIDOW, COME ON, GIVE ME SOMETHING--

OH, BUT I HAVE.

THIS IS MY GIFT TO YOU. *ALL* OF YOU.

THIS WORLD IS THE WAY IT IS BECAUSE OF US. BECAUSE OF MY GENERATION. WE WERE TOO WEAK, TOO PETTY, TOO SELFISH--AND NOW WE'VE LEFT YOU WITH THIS...MESS. I CAN'T FIX THAT--

--BUT I CAN TEACH YOU HOW TO ***SURVIVE*** IT. THE SAME WAY I WAS TAUGHT. IT WAS MY CURSE-- BUT IT CAN BE YOUR BLESSING.

BECAUSE TRUST ME, THIS IS GOING TO GET MUCH, MUCH WORSE--

OR YOU COULD BE WRONG.

SORRY?

WE'D LOOK PRETTY STUPID THEN, RIGHT? ME, THE KID WHO THINKS HE'S GONNA KILL CAP, AND YOU, THE LADY WHO JUST ***REALLY*** WANTS TO.

JUST SAYING, IT MIGHT NOT HURT TO HOLD OUT A LITTLE HOPE, EVEN IF WE DON'T TELL ANYBODY. COME ON--

MAYBE NONE OF THAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN. MAYBE IRON MAN AND HAWKEYE WERE RIGHT. MAYBE THEY'RE OUT THERE FINDING THOSE COSMIC CUBE FRAGMENTS, AND THEY'RE GONNA FIX CAPTAIN AMERICA ANY DAY NOW.

--SOME PART OF YOU MUST BE PULLING FOR THEM, RIGHT?

THE MOUNT.

"THEY HAVE SO MANY SINS TO PAY FOR, THESE PEOPLE WHO WANT TO BE CALLED HEROES.

"THEY TOLD THE WORLD THAT THEY WERE THERE TO PROTECT THEM, TO KEEP THEM SAFE--

"--BUT IT WAS ALWAYS ABOUT THEMSELVES. THEIR OWN POWER, THEIR OWN SENSE OF GLORY. THEIR OWN *PRIDE.*

"IN THE NAME OF THAT, THEY CHOSE TO IGNORE ALL OF THEIR MANY FAILURES--THE BETRAYALS, THE ATROCITIES, THE CATACLYSMS THAT THEY BROUGHT ON.

"THEY HID THE TRUTH, THEY TRIED TO BURY THEIR SHAME--

"--AND THEY BUILT THEIR BETTER, SAFER WORLD ON A FOUNDATION OF THOSE SECRET AND LIES."

BUT YOU AND I KNOW THAT BETTER THAN ANYONE, DON'T WE?

"EVENTUALLY, THE TRUTH ALWAYS COMES OUT.

FORGIVE ME.

"AND WHEN IT DOES?

FORGIVE ME!!!

"ALL THEIR WALLS WILL COME CRUMBLING DOWN.

"THEY'LL FINALLY ANSWER FOR WHAT THEY'VE DONE."

TONY, IS HE--

NAH, MOCKINGBIRD-- NOT EVEN **ODINSON'S** STRONG ENOUGH TO GET THROUGH THE SHIELDING. THIS PLACE MIGHT NOT HAVE THE BEST WATER PRESSURE, BUT WHEN IT COMES TO FORTIFICATIONS, WE'RE COVERED.

"I BUILT IN PREVENTATIVE MEASURES FOR THE VISION'S TECH--

"--AND THE MYSTICAL DEFENSES DAIMON HELLSTROM CONJURED UP FOR US SEEM TO BE HOLDING NICELY AGAINST THE SCARLET WITCH..."

...SO YEAH, AT LEAST FOR THE MOMENT, OUR PROBLEM'S NOT OUTSIDE--

--IT'S IN HERE.

SOMEONE IN THIS ROOM IS **HYDRA.**

"THEY SHOULDN'T BE SURPRISED, REALLY..."

...WHEN EVERYTHING IS BUILT ON THEIR DECEPTION, HOW CAN ANYONE EXPECT ANYTHING GOOD TO COME FROM THAT?

THEY'RE CORRUPTED TO THEIR CORE, YOU SEE. AND SOMEWHERE, DEEP DOWN, THEY KNOW IT. THEY HATE THEMSELVES AND ONE ANOTHER FOR IT--

"--AND THAT'S WHY IT'S ALWAYS BEEN SO EASY TO GET THEM TO TURN ON EACH OTHER.

TONY, WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU *TALKING* ABOUT?

*THEY **USED** US-- LET US GATHER US WHATEVER COSMIC CUBE FRAGMENTS WE COULD FIND. AND NOW THEY'RE COMING TO COLLECT--*

*--BECAUSE ONE OF US **TOLD** THEM TO.*

THIS IS PREPOSTEROUS.

IS IT, PIETRO?

WHAT ARE YOU IMPLYING, MOCKINGBIRD?

NOTHING. JUST THAT YOU SEEMED TO DISAPPEAR IN THE MIDDLE OF HALF OUR FIGHTS WITH HYDRA BACK IN THE FIELD--

I ***TOLD*** YOU! I WAS LOOKING FOR MY ***SISTER***--SHE'S THE ONLY REASON I AGREED TO HELP YOU IN THE FIRST PLACE--

WHICH SOUNDS TO ME LIKE THEY HAD SOMETHING TO ***OFFER*** YOU IN EXCHANGE FOR SELLING US OUT!

"THEY CAN'T REALLY HELP THEMSELVES, I SUPPOSE. IT'S JUST WHO THEY ARE. BUT IT ISN'T WHO ***WE*** ARE--"

--IS IT, DOCTOR BANNER?

Uhh, maybe, Steve-- but first, just one little question--

You're @!#$ Hydra now?

How long have I been *dead*?!

I UNDERSTAND THAT ALL THIS MUST BE...***DISORIENTING*** FOR YOU. AND I WISH I COULD SIT HERE AND EXPLAIN IT ALL TO YOU, I REALLY DO--

--BUT UNFORTUNATELY, TIME IS NOT OUR FRIEND. YOU WON'T BE BACK WITH US FOR LONG.

"EVERYTHING IS COMING TO A HEAD NOW."

HOW ***DARE*** YOU ACCUSE ME OF SUCH A THING! I GAVE MY WORD AND I HONORED IT! AND BESIDES, WHAT ABOUT YOU?

EXCUSE ME?!

YOU THINK I DIDN'T SEE YOU *SNEAKING OFF* TO MAKE THOSE SECRET CALLS OF YOURS WHILE WE WERE OUT THERE?

WAIT-- WHAT'S HE TALKING ABOUT?

IT'S NOTHING-- IT'S NONE OF YOUR BUSINESS--

UHH... IT KINDA MIGHT BE.

SAM'S RIGHT--WHO WERE YOU CALLING, BOBBI?

=SIGH= FINE, JIG'S UP...

...MARIA HILL.

*MARIA HILL?! YOU'RE TALKING TO HILL-- AFTER **ST. LOUIS**? AFTER--*

A LOT OF PEOPLE DIED.

YOU THINK I *WANTED* TO? SHE'S GOT OPERATIONS PLANNED ALL UP AND DOWN THE WEST COAST. I ASKED HER TO HOLD OFF--TO GIVE YOU A CHANCE, TONY! BUT YET AGAIN--

--YOU LET US DOWN WITH YOUR LITTLE WILD GOOSE CHASE.

THAT ISN'T FAIR--

ACTUALLY, TONY--

--IT IS. YOU NEED TO TELL THEM THE TRUTH.

RAZ-- DON'T--

WHAT TRUTH?

HE NEVER BUILT A... COSMIC CUBE DETECTOR OR WHATEVER. HE WAS JUST USING THE HYDRA INTEL RICK JONES SENT US.

YOU CANNOT BE SERIOUS--

WHAT?! SOMEBODY HAD TO STEP UP AND DO SOMETHING--

"DO SOMETHING"?! YOU ALMOST GOT US KILLED, YOU ARROGANT LITTLE--HERCULES IS IN THE INFIRMARY RIGHT NOW!

AND I'M VERY SORRY FOR THAT-- BUT WE NEED TO FOCUS ON THE SITUATION AT HAND. ONE OF YOU IS HYDRA--

ONE OF US?! WHAT ABOUT YOU? IF THEY TOOK CONTROL OF THE VISION, PERHAPS YOU ARE ALSO--

DON'T BE RIDICULOUS, QUICKSILVER. YOU HAD THE MOST TO GAIN. BOBBI'S RIGHT ABOUT THAT, EVEN IF SHE IS HER OWN SPECIAL KIND OF TURNCOAT--

TURNCOAT? YOU SENT US ON A SUICIDE MISSION! IF I--

GUYS, GUYS! STOP! JUST-- STOP--

--IT WAS ME, OKAY?

IT WAS ME.

THEIR WEAKNESS INFECTS EVERYTHING THEY DO. THEIR FEAR DICTATES EVERY DECISION THEY MAKE.

LIKE THE WAY THEY FEAR *YOU*--

--AND HOW THEY PUNISHED YOU FOR IT. THROWING YOU IN A ROCKET AND FIRING YOU OFF TO SOME DISTANT PLANET, LEAVING YOU TO DIE.

BUT THAT DIDN'T WORK, DID IT? SO THE NEXT TIME THEY TRIED SOMETHING MORE DIRECT--

--PUTTING AN *ARROW* THROUGH YOUR BRAIN.

WHAT IS IT ABOUT YOU THAT MAKES THESE PEOPLE--WHO HAVE APPOINTED THEMSELVES THE PROTECTORS OF EVERYTHING GOOD AND NOBLE IN THIS WORLD--BEHAVE LIKE BLOODTHIRSTY SAVAGES? I HAVE A THEORY...

IT'S BECAUSE THEY HATE WHATEVER DOESN'T BEND TO THEIR SUPPOSED ENLIGHTENED AUTHORITY. THEY HATE WHAT THEY DON'T HAVE. THEY HATE ***REAL*** STRENGTH--

--AND YOU'VE ALWAYS SAID YOU WERE THE STRONGEST ONE THERE IS.

WELL, I'D LIKE TO GIVE YOU A CHANCE TO PROVE JUST THAT. I'D LIKE TO GIVE YOU THE OPPORTUNITY TO SEE SOME ***JUSTICE*** DONE.

JUST BELOW US ARE THE PEOPLE WHO MURDERED YOU IN COLD BLOOD. I'LL GIVE THEM TO YOU...

...ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS SAY THE WORD.

Yeah... I'm gonna give that a *hard pass.*

I Feel like the guy who came out of the ice and found the world just got dumber while he was frozen.

You're damn right I'm angry about what they did to me. What they *keep* doing to me. And if I see them, yeah, there will be some words. but again--you're *Hydra.*

Maybe that became *fashionable* while I was out. But last I checked, you're the evil fascist totalitarian bad guys. And me?

Well, sure, maybe it always ends with me getting fired and them trying to *kill* me...

But I'm still an *Avenger,* dammit. And if that's a *problem?*

Then you can just go ahead and put me back in whatever box you pulled me out of. Because honestly--

--it's been a *very* long time since I slept that well.

HM. DISAPPOINTING. I DO UNDERSTAND, THOUGH, DOCTOR BANNER. THERE'S NO HARD FEELINGS.

That right?

OF COURSE. I MEAN, WE GO BACK A LONG WAY. I CAN'T EVEN SAY THAT I'M AT ALL SURPRISED THAT THAT'S YOUR POSITION. BUT, THEN--

--I WASN'T TALKING TO *YOU,* BRUCE.

WHAT HAVE YOU *DONE*, LANG?!

I HAD TO! THEY FOUND HER IN FRANCE--THEY FOUND *CASSIE!* THEY HAVE MY *DAUGHTER!!*

YOU *SPINELESS* SON OF A--

THEY WERE GOING TO *KILL* HER! I *HAD* TO!

AND HOW MANY PEOPLE ARE GONNA DIE *HERE* NOW, *HUH?!*

I'M SO SORRY...I'M SO SORRY...

UH, GUYS?

YOU--YOU MIGHT WANNA COME TAKE A LOOK AT THIS...

OH MY GOD.

THIS IS THE STORY OF HOW WE FELL FOR THE LAST TIME.

THE MOMENT WE WERE BROKEN.

OVERRUN.

AND AS WE GAZED UPON THE DEVASTATION--

--WE SAW IN IT OURSELVES.

WE SAW EVERYTHING WE'D DONE TO CAUSE IT.

HOW HAD WE MANAGED TO FALL SO FAR?

HOW HAD WE MANAGED TO SINK SO LOW?

HOW HAD WE LOST OUR WAY?

WHY DID WE DO THIS TO OURSELVES?

WHY DID WE DO THIS TO EACH OTHER?

AND SO WE CLOSED OUR EYES, AND PREPARED FOR THE JUDGMENT.

BUT NOT ALL OF US.

WELL, LOOKIT THAT. FINALLY--

SOME OF US STILL KNEW HOW TO BE HEROES.

--IT'S CLOBBERIN' TIME!

UNFF!!!

CRASH

OUT OF THE WAY, BARTON!

CLINT, COME ON--SNAP OUT OF IT--

HE WAS RIGHT, BOBBI... HE WAS RIGHT ABOUT *ALL* OF IT...

WE DID THIS TO OURSELVES, AND NOW IT'S COMING BACK AROUND. ALL OUR GHOSTS. EVERYTHING WE'RE PRETENDING DIDN'T HAPPEN.

I KILLED HIM...I DID THE ONE THING I SAID I'D NEVER DO--AND I DID IT TO MY *FRIEND.* WHAT DOES THAT MAKE *ME?*

WE *DESERVE* THIS.

YEAH... YOU KNOW WHAT, CLINT? MAYBE YOU'RE RIGHT. MAYBE WE DO--

--BUT DO *THEY?!*

AND IN THAT MOMENT OF REPRIEVE--

HEAD FOR THE SOUTH EXITS!

--WE BEGAN TO REMEMBER.

BEGAN TO REMEMBER HOW TO STAND AGAIN.

UH, RAZ-- WHERE ARE WE GOING? THEY SAID SOUTH EXITS--

I EVER TELL YOU MY SUPER HERO SECRET ORIGIN, RAYSHAUN? I WAS A GRAD STUDENT, STUDYING A.I.--WORKING PART-TIME IN TECH SUPPORT.

THIS BAD GUY, EGGHEAD-- HE BRAINWASHED ME, MADE ME HELP HIM ACTIVATE THIS WHOLE TEAM OF ANDROID AVENGERS HE'D STOLEN FROM HANK PYM.

SOUNDS LIKE AN ASS.

OH, HE WAS--

REMEMBERED THE EVIL WE STOOD AGAINST.

--BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN HE DIDN'T HAVE SOME GOOD IDEAS.

REMEMBERED WHO WE FOUGHT FOR.

GET TO THE JETS! COME ON, MOVE! WE'RE ALMOST--

--THERE.

GO.

MOVE, PEOPLE, MOVE! NOW! HURRY!

WE NEED TO GET THE HELL OUT OF HERE--

NO ARGUMENT FROM ME. GOT MOST EVERYONE ACCOUNTED FOR, SOMEHOW--

"--EXCEPT TONY."

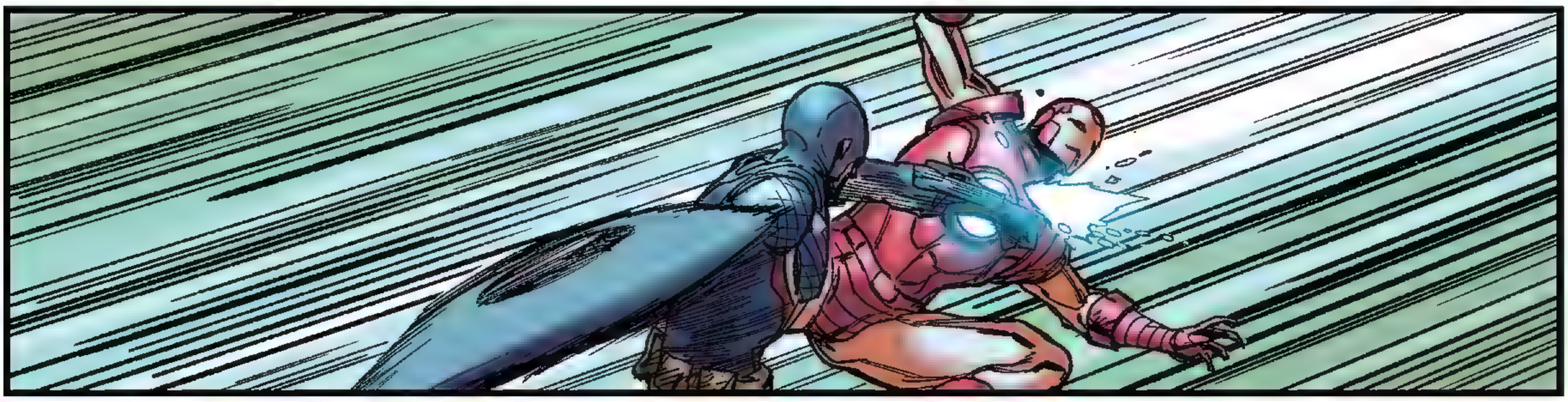
CLANG

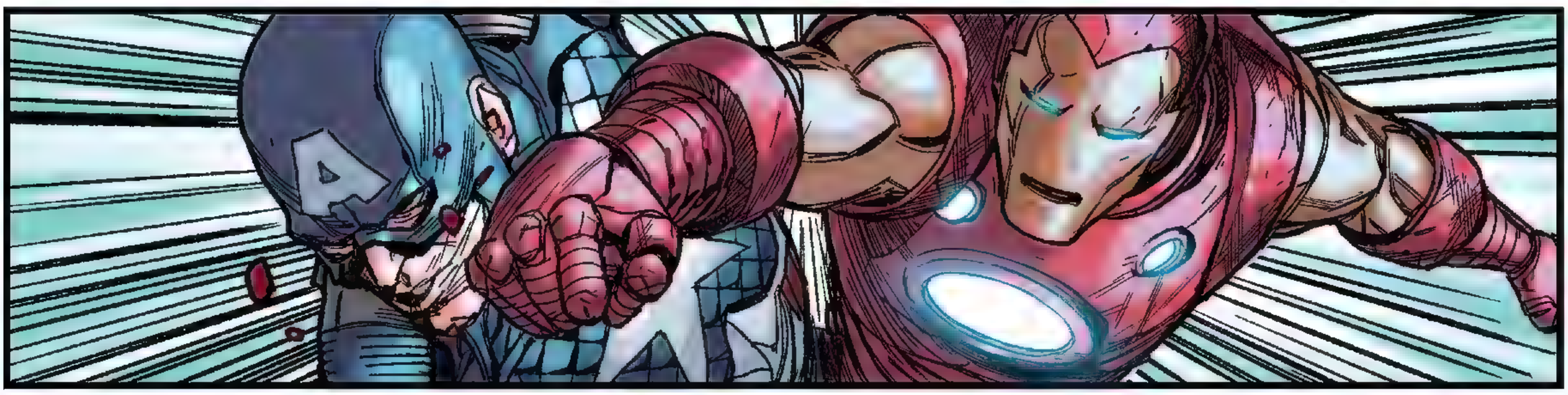
YOU'RE TOO LATE, TONY. I ALREADY HAVE YOUR FRAGMENTS--

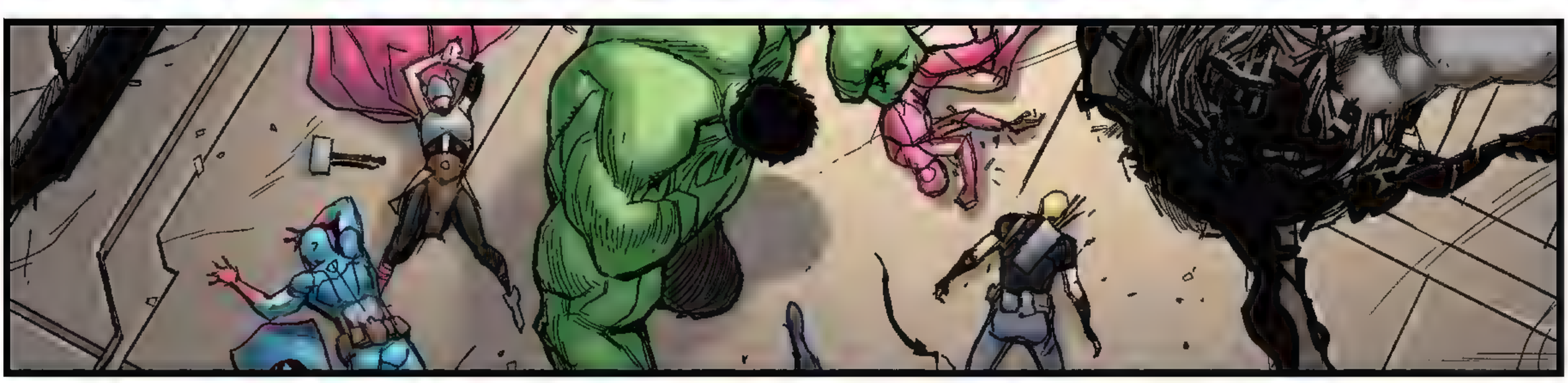
--AND NOW YOU HAVE SOMETHING FROM ME IN RETURN.

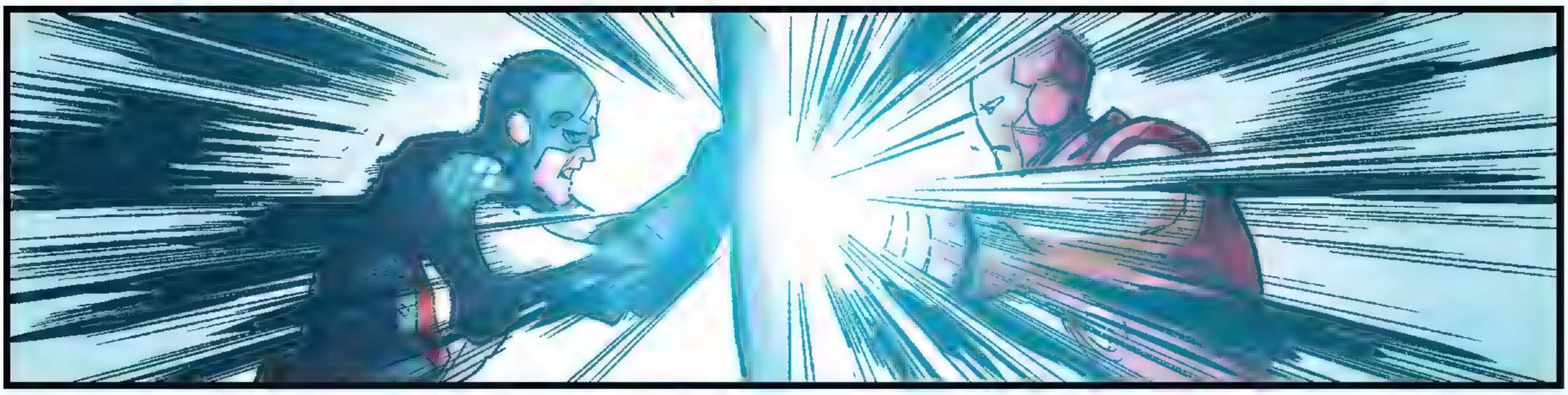
IT'S BASED ON ULTRON'S TECH. KEEPS YOU IN ONE PLACE FOR A WHILE. MAKES YOU TANGIBLE. VULNERABLE TO--

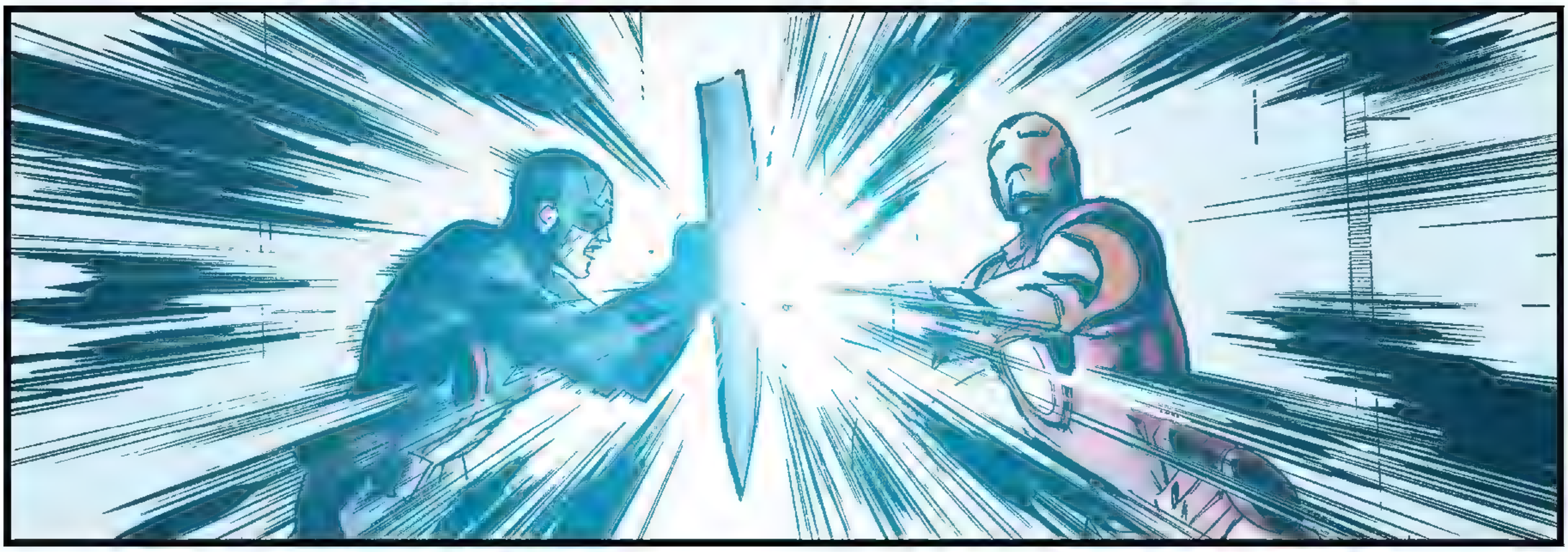
ATTACKS?

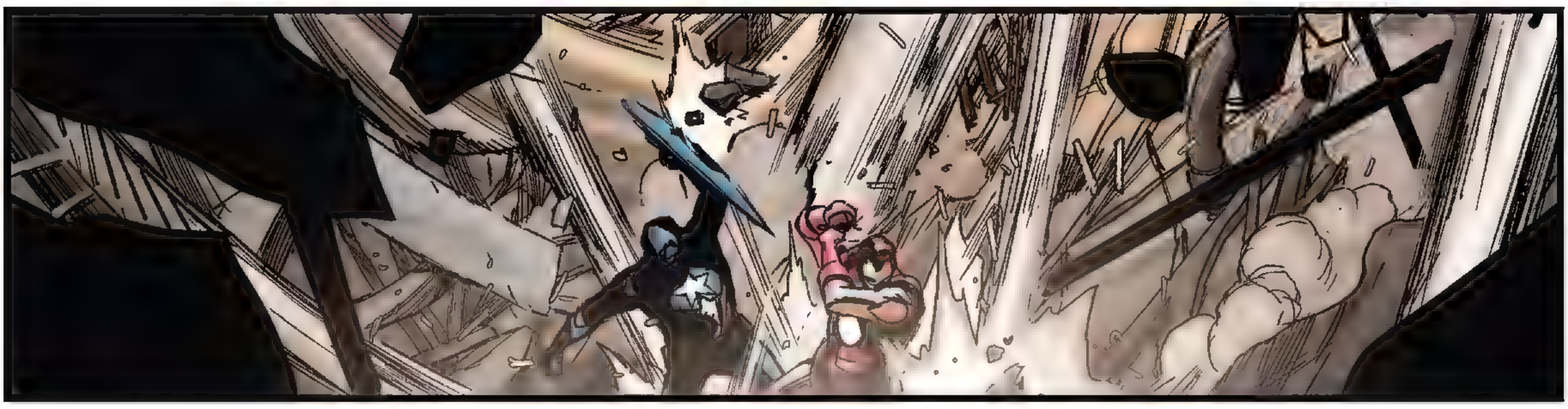


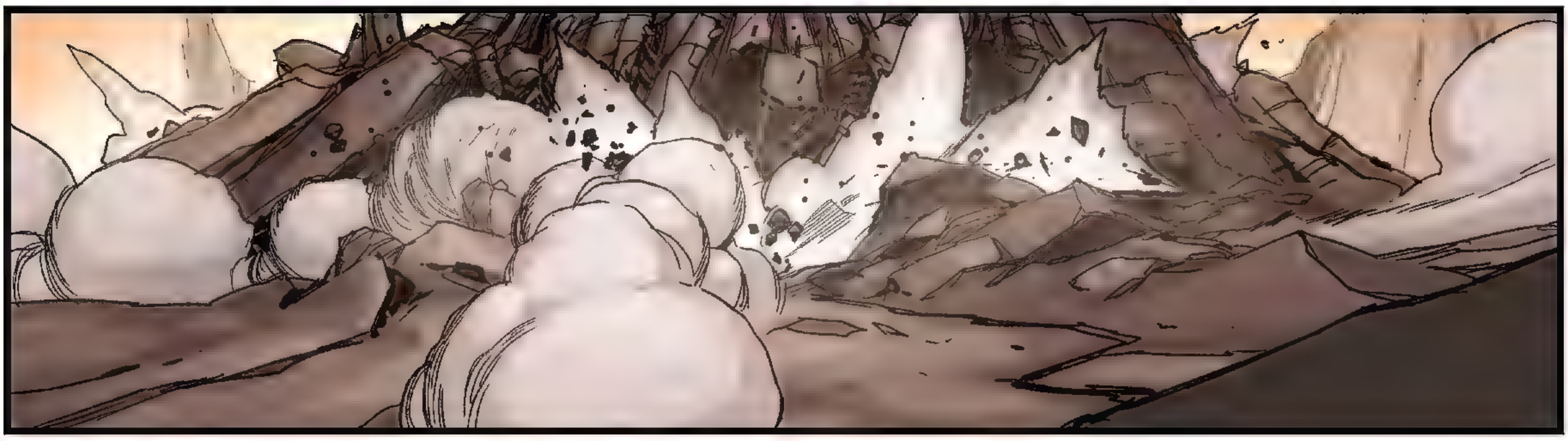












I WASN'T SURE WHAT TO THINK WHEN YOU CAME BACK, TONY--

--WHICH IS TO SAY I WASN'T SURE IF YOU WERE JUST SOME KIND OF *SIMULATION.*

CLEAN SLATE PROTOCOL.

BUT AS ZOLA EXPLAINS IT, YOU DOWNLOADED YOUR ACTUAL *CONSCIOUSNESS* INTO THIS...A.I. MATRIX.

WHICH, BY MOST DEFINITIONS IN MODERN PHILOSOPHY, MEANS IT'S REALLY YOU.

AND THAT'S GOOD--

--BECAUSE THIS WOULD BE A LOT OF TROUBLE TO GO THROUGH TO KILL AN ANSWERING MACHINE.

STEVE-- WAIT!!!

I'M SORRY.

MADAME HYDRA--I'M PICKING UP AN UNUSUAL ENERGY SIGNATURE FROM THE MOUNT.

WHAT IS IT?

NO.

I KNOW IT'S NOT REALLY YOU IN THERE-- I KNOW IT CAN'T BE, BUT-- I STILL WANT TO SAY IT.

WHEN WE WENT TO WAR, AND I STOOD OVER YOUR BODY, I KNEW I HADN'T WON ANYTHING. ALL I'D DONE WAS FAIL YOU. I SAID THEN, IT WASN'T WORTH IT.

AND WHEN YOU CAME BACK? I TOLD MYSELF I WOULD **NEVER** MAKE THAT MISTAKE AGAIN.

"UNTIL I DID OVER AND OVER"

BUT THIS TIME WAS GONNA BE DIFFERENT, RIGHT? THIS WAS MY CHANCE. I COULD BE **YOU** THIS TIME. GIVE THEM ALL HOPE. MAKE THEM **BELIEVE** IN SOMETHING--

BUT I SCREWED IT UP, DIDN'T I? BECAUSE I CAN DO ANYTHING. I CAN BUILD THE MOST AMAZING THINGS--

"BUT I CAN'T MAKE MYSELF WHAT YOU ARE. ALL I CAN DO IS FAKE IT"

"THERE IS SOMETHING LACKING INSIDE ME. I GUESS THAT'S WHY WE FOUGHT. BECAUSE I WAS JEALOUS"

JUST PLEASE KNOW-- I WANTED TO SAVE YOU SO BADLY. BECAUSE I WANTED TO BE TO YOU WHAT YOU ALWAYS WERE TO ME--

--MY HERO.

I'M SO SORRY I KEEP LETTING YOU DOWN, CAP.

STEVEN!!!

ELISA?

BANISH.

ELISA!!!

GOODBYE, SON.

BREAKING NEWS OUT OF NEVADA AS HYDRA TROOPS LAUNCHED A MAJOR SURPRISE ATTACK AGAINST UNDERGROUND FORCES, WITH REPORTS THAT THE SUBVERSIVES' SECRET BASE HAS BEEN DESTROYED.

NO WORD ON SURVIVORS.

WAKE UP, ALL OF YOU.

HYDRA HAS WON. OUR FRIENDS ARE ALL DEAD.

"TOMORROW WE KILL CAPTAIN AMERICA."

TO BE CONTINUED!

Secret Empire

July

X-Men Gold #7 & #8

The X-Mansion was one of the few safe places in the Darkforce --until they let X-Cutioner in!

X-Men Blue #7 & #8

Emma Frost is back and badder than ever.

Champions #10

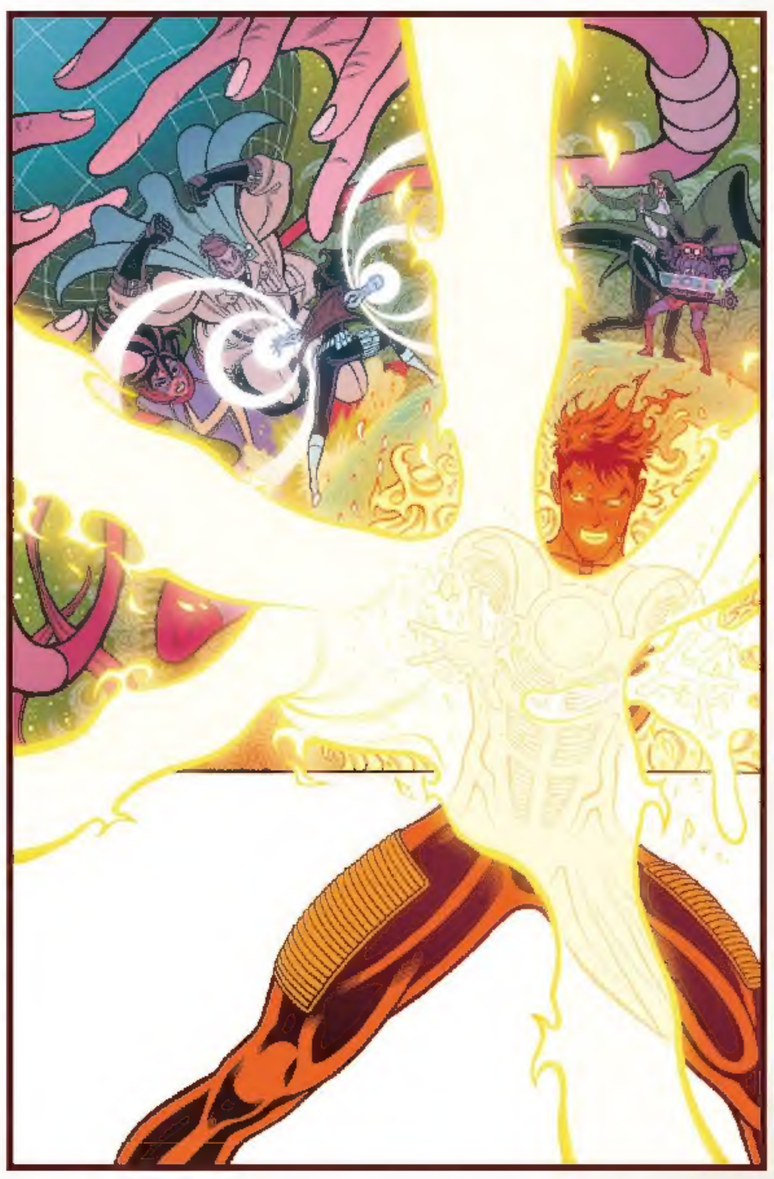
The Champions storm an Inhuman holding camp searching for their missing teammate.

Beyond the Shield

The Mighty Captain Marvel #7

Can Captain Marvel's forces hold out against the Chitauri?

Secret Warriors #4



Quake struggles to keep her team together long enough to confront Mister Hyde!

Deadpool #33 & #34

Deadpool threw in with Hydra --what does that mean for his relationship with his daughter?

Secret Empire

July

Avengers #9

What happened to Thor after Captain America stole her hammer?

U.S.Avengers #8

Toni Ho's father died saving Tony Stark's life--will Toni do the same for a dying Roberto Da Costa?

Occupy Avengers #9

Hawkeye's team makes a final stand to protect a group of farmers from Hydra.

Darkforce New York

Doctor Strange #23

Doctor Strange and Wilson Fisk team up to take down Baron Mordo!

Uncanny Avengers #25

The Unity Squad faces darkness without and within as the Darkforce assaults New York!

Amazing Spider-Man #30

Otto Octavius is back--and he's working with Hydra!

SECRET EMPIRE

NEXT

IT WAS FORETOLD BY ULYSSES, IT'S HAUNTED SPIDER-MAN'S NIGHTMARES FOR MONTHS, AND NOW THE MOMENT HAS ARRIVED: IT'S TIME FOR MILES MORALES TO KILL CAPTAIN AMERICA...OR IS IT?

CAPTAIN AMERICA: STEVE ROGERS #19

A TRAUMATIC BETRAYAL PUSHES CAPTAIN AMERICA FURTHER INTO DARKNESS.*

CAPTAIN AMERICA: SAM WILSON #24

IN THE UNDERGROUND'S DARKEST MOMENT, CAN SAM TAKE UP THE SHIELD AND LEAD THEM TO VICTORY?

SECRET EMPIRE: BRAVE NEW WORLD #3 & #4

THERE'S A TRAITOR IN ATLANTIS --AND IT MIGHT COST NAMOR HIS TRUCE WITH HYDRA.

*READ BOTH ISSUES OF CAPTAIN AMERICA AFTER READING SECRET EMPIRE #7.

ZONE